



California
Department of
Child Support
Services

*Supporting
California's
Children*

State Disbursement Unit

Fact Sheet

Federal law requires states to have a single statewide automated child support system, including a single location for processing all child support collections and payments. The delay in meeting this requirement has resulted in California paying more than \$970 million in penalties. Those federal penalties will stop when the new automated statewide system is in place.

To meet federal requirements, the California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) is implementing a central payment processing site called the State Disbursement Unit (SDU). The SDU is responsible for collection and disbursement of all child support payments previously processed by the state's 52 local child support agencies, plus all wage assignment payments for private child support orders not currently processed by local child support agencies.

In November 2005, counties began transitioning to the SDU in a series of waves. During the first four waves, 47 local child support agencies in the following counties—Amador, Alpine, Calaveras, Kings, Modoc, Nevada, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tulare, Inyo/Mono, Lassen, Tehama, El Dorado, Santa Cruz/San Benito, Merced, Stanislaus, Kern, Fresno, Orange, San Luis Obispo, Imperial, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Riverside, San Bernardino, Colusa, Mariposa, Trinity, Plumas, Glenn, Del Norte, Tuolumne, Marin, Napa, Lake, Mendocino, Sutter, Yuba, Madera, Humboldt, Placer, Yolo, Butte, Shasta, Sonoma, Monterey, Solano, Contra Costa and San Diego—have transferred child support payment collection and processing to the SDU, representing approximately 65 percent of the state's child support program caseload.

Enhanced Services

Families receiving support, parents making support payments, and employers will receive enhanced services from the new system such as:

- Web and toll-free call center access to information.
- Immediate access to direct deposit services for families receiving support payments, if not already available.
- Beginning in summer 2006, families can get instant access to support dollars through electronic payment cards, similar to ATM or debit cards, which can be used at ATM machines as well as retail outlets.
- Parents can make payments using credit cards over a secure internet connection and set up electronic payment transfers from a checking or savings account.

Employers will be able to electronically transfer payments for wage withholding directly to the state and will have access to an Electronic Help Desk.

Implementation

To minimize the impact on customers and ensure smooth local transitions, SDU implementation is being phased in statewide in a series of waves. During SDU transition, local child support agencies will forward child support payments daily via express mail services to the SDU for processing. This extra step during system transition will add a few days to when families usually receive their child support payments. Outreach in transitioning counties is being jointly provided by DCSS and local child support agencies.

- Wave 5 counties, representing approximately 9 percent of the state's caseload or approximately 171,000 cases, will transition in April 2006. Wave 5 counties are: San Mateo, San Francisco, Alameda, and Sacramento.
- Wave 6, Los Angeles County—representing approximately 26 percent of the state's caseload or approximately 475,000 cases—will transition in May 2006

In summer 2006 when the SDU is fully implemented and operational statewide, child support payments handled by local child support agencies and all wage withholding payments from private child support cases will be redirected to and handled by the SDU.

For more information, log on to www.childsup.ca.gov.